

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 000200

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FOLL REPEAT MOSCOW 19196 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BELGRADE BERLIN
USMISSION BERLIN BUDAPEST BUCHAREST CINCEUR CINCLANT CINCPAC
CINCUSAREUR CINCUSNAVEUR LENINGRAD MUNICH NATO PRAGUE SHAPE
SOFIA MBFR VIENNA USIA WASHDC WARSAW 31 DEC 74 QUOTE
C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 19196
. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
SUBJ: SOVIET MEDIA ON THE U.S.

CINCEUR, CINCLANT, CINCPAC, CINCUSAREUR, CINCNAVEUR AND
SHAPE FOR POLAD
USIA FOR IBS, IEE, IPS

REF: MOSCOW 18116 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF THE U.S. HAS BECOME
MARKEDLY MORE STRIDENT AND CRITICAL IN PAST WEEKS, PROBABLY
AS PART OF A GENERAL SOVIET REACTION AGAINST THE TERMS OF THE
TRADE AND EXIM LEGISLATION. TOUGHENING HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF
AN INCREASING NUMBER OF NEWS ITEMS REPORTING UNFAVORABLE
FACETS OF U.S. LIFE AND THE WORSENING STATE OF THE WESTERN--
ESPECIALLY THE U.S.--ECONOMY. THE U.S. IS ALSO BEING TAKEN TO
TASK MORE OFTEN BY NAME FOR INTERFERENCE IN AFFAIRS OF OTHER
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NATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, OBLIGATORY BOWS TO IMPORTANCE OF

SOVIET-US RELATIONS CONTINUE TO BE MADE, THOUGH THE FREQUENCY OF SUCH PROTESTATIONS HAS DROPPED OFF CONSIDERABLY SINCE THE PEAK PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER VLADIVOSTOK. AN AUTHORITATIVE ARTICLE IN THE DECEMBER KOMMUNIST -- WRITTEN BEFORE PASSAGE OF THE TRADE BILL -- CALLS FOR "A STRONG WEB OF MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TIES" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION. SOVIET PERIODICALS AND TELEVISION, CONTRARY TO THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESS, ARE NOW DISPLAYING A SLIGHTLY MORE BALANCED PICTURE OF THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

2. SEEMINGLY AT LEAST PARTIALLY AS A RESULT OF PASSAGE OF A VERSION OF THE TRADE BILL LITTLE TO SOVIET LIKING (SEPTELS), SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF THE U.S. IN THE PAST WEEKS HAS BECOME SEVERAL NOTCHES TOUGHER. SOME OF THE INCREASINGLY UNFAVORABLE PICTURE BEING PAINTED OF THE U.S. ADMITTEDLY IS DUE TO THE WORSENING WESTERN ECONOMIC SITUATION, BUT SOVIET REPORTING BY ITS UNBALANCED APPROACH DISTORTS THIS BAD NEWS ABOUT THE WEST TO MAKE IT SEEM EVEN MORE CATASTROPHIC.

3. PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA, WHICH IN BETTER TIMES HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO DODGE NAMING US OUTRIGHT BUT NEVERTHELESS MANAGE TO GET THE IDEA ACROSS THAT WE ARE THE CULPRITS, ARE GRADUALLY MOVING TOWARD KRASNAYA'S ZVEZDA'S PENCHANT FOR NAMING US DIRECTLY. THE LATTER NEVERTHELESS CONTINUES TO BE THE CHIEF PLUCKER OF FEATHERS FROM THE AMERICAN EAGLE'S TAIL. ITS DECEMBER 19 ISSUE CARRIED A TASS ITEM REPLAYING A PRG STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE PRESENCE OF THE USS ENTERPRISE OFF THE SOUTH VIETNAM COAST AND CALLING IT A "CONTINUATION OF U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN VIETNAM AND A FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS." THE DECEMBER 22 ISSUE PRINTED AN ARTICLE WRITTEN BY THE DRV DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE WHICH ACCUSES THE U.S. OF FORCING THIEU TO CONTINUE FIGHTING AND TO INCREASE HIS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THE DECEMBER 27 ISSUE RECOUNTS IN A TASS ITEM HOW AMERICAN B-52S BOMBED A VIETNAMESE VILLAGE IN 1972, AND QUOTES A VILLAGE ELDER AS SAYING THAT THE INHABITANTS WILL NEVER FORGET THE CRIMES WHICH WERE COMMITTED BY U.S. IMPERIALISTS ON VIETNAMESE TERRITORY. THE SAME ELDER ALSO CALLED, ACCORDING TO TASS, FOR U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR.

4. THE OTHER PAPERS IN THE CENTRAL PRESS ARE ALSO GETTING
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TOUGHER. DECEMBER 29'S PRAVDA, FOR EXAMPLE, CONTAINS SEVEN ITEMS ON ITS INTERNATIONAL PAGE (OUT OF A TOTAL OF 23 ON ALL SUBJECTS) WHICH EITHER CRITICIZE THE U.S. BY NAME OR BY BROAD IMPLICATION. THE SEVEN ITEMS: A CARTOON SHOWING A SMILING MONEY BAD WEARING A CAPITALIST'S HAT AND TITLED "FOR IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSION" BEING SUCKLED BY PRESS, RADIO, TELEVISION, AND MOVIES. THE LEGEND: "DESPITE DETENTE, IMPERIALIST STATES CONTINUE TO SPEND HUGE SUMS TO MAINTAIN A PROPAGANDA APPARATUS

AIMED AT IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSION OF THE SOCIALIST STATES." ITEM:
AN ARTICLE ON MEDICAL COSTS IN THE U.S. BEGINNING WITH THE
SENTENCE "MANY AMERICANS, BEFORE GOING TO A DOCTOR, CAREFULLY
WEIGH WHETHER THEIR HEALTH OR THEIR BUDGET IS THE MOST THREATENED
...." ITEM: AN ARTICLE REPORTING INCREASING U.S. BANK PARTICIPA-
TION IN THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY SINCE DECLARATION OF MARTIAL LAW.
THE IMPLICATION, OF COURSE, IS THAT U.S. CAPITAL FLOW (IN
INSELF A BAD THING) FOLLOWS REACTION. ITEM: A REPLAY OF A
CALL BY REPRESENTATIVE HARRINGTON "TO STOP ILLEGAL INTERFERENCE
BY THE CIA IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND ITS SPYING
ON AMERICAN CITIZENS." ITEM: AN ARTICLE ON GUATEMALA WHICH
RECOUNTS HOW THE CIA OVERTHREW A GOVERNMENT THERE IN 1954 AND
HOW IT IS NOW SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST
"THE BEST REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE." ITEM: A COMMENTARY
ON U.S. EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE AN EXTENSION OF ITS BASE RIGHTS IN
BAHRAIN WHICH CONCLUDES THAT "THE EFFORTS OF THE PENTAGON TO
MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN CREATES A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATES IN THIS
REGION AND CUTS ACROSS THE GENERAL PROCESS OF IMPROVEMENT IN
INTERNATION RELATIONS."
UTMV BOTH PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA ON DECEMBER 28 AND 29 PICK UP
THE CANARD FIRST FLOATED IN KRASNAYA ZVEZDA EARLY IN DECEMBER
(REFTEL) ON WESTERN PLANS FOR ARMED INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST. IZVESTIYA'S INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER COLUMN REFERS TO THE
JACK ANDERSON COLUMN AND THE NEWSWEEK STORY ON THIS SUBJECT.
PRAVDA, IN ITS AUTHORITATIVE WEEKLY REVIEW, QUOTES THE LONDON
DAILY TELEGRAPH TO THE EFFECT THAT SUCH INTERVENTION WOULD
BE NECESSARY IF THE ARAB STATES WERE TO IMPOSE A NEW EMBARGO.
ON DECEMBER 31 BOTH PRAVDA (WHICH NAMES THE U.S. DIRECTLY) AND
KRASNAYA ZVEZDA IN SIGNED COMMENTARIES ACCUSE THE CAPITALIST
WORLD OF INCREASING ARMS SPENDING AS A METHOD OF PUMPING MONEY
INTO ITS FALTERING ECONOMIES.

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6. ON ANY GIVEN DAY, AND ESPECIALLY OF LATE, THE VAST MAJORITY
OF ARTICLES WHICH APPEAR IN THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF
THE U.S. WILL BE DISTINCTLY UNFAVORABLE TO THE U.S. IN THE
CONTEXT OF THE WESTERN PRESS, SOME OF THE ARTICLES WOULD NOT
BE CONSIDERED TO BE DRASTICALLY EXAGGERATED--AND INDEED SOME
ARE OBJECTIVE REPORTS. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOVIET PRESS,
HOWEVER, WHERE NO OTHER BALANCING ARTICLES APPEAR TO CORRECT
THE ENTIRELY UNFAVORABLE PICTURE OF THE U.S. CONTINUOUSLY DRAWN
IN SUCH ARTICLES, THE RESULT IS THAT FURTHER "OBJECTIVE"
REPORTING OF U.S. PROBLEM AREAS DISTORTS EVEN MORE A PORTRAYAL
OF THE U.S. ALREADY SADLY OUT OF LINE WITH REALITY.

7. COMMENTARY ON THE STATE OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS ON THE
OFFICIAL PLANE, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE
OF A DEEPENING OF DETENTE AND ON THE NEED FOR INCREASED

COOPERATION IN ALMOST ALL AREAS OF ENDEAVOR. THE IZVESTIAY WEEKLY INTERNATIONAL REVIEW ON DECEMBER 29 NOTED THAT "RELIABLE PEACE IS UNTHINKABLE WITHOUT A FUNDAMENTAL NORMALIZATION OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS." THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THE RESULTS OF VLADIVOSTOK CONTINUES TO BE THE SUBJECT OF COMMENTARY, THOUGH IT IS NO LONGER THE THEME OF THE HOUR THAT IT WAS IN EARLY DECEMBER. THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF THE AUTHORITATIVE KOMMUNIST CARRIES AN ARTICLE BY PRAVDA FOREIGN EDITOR V. NEKRASOV, WHO WAS IN VLADIVOSTOK, WHICH COVERS THE USUAL THEMES ON THE SUMMIT MEETING AND IN ADDITION GIVES HIS READERS A BLOW-BY-BLOW ACCOUNT OF THE SUMMIT WHICH MAKES CLEAR THAT NEARLY ALL OF THE TIME SPENT IN MEETINGS WAS DEVOTED TO SALT, AND THAT OTHER SUBJECTS SUCH AS CSCE AND THE MIDDLE EAST, GOT LITTLE TIME INDEED. THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE ARTICLE IS SUMMED UP IN A SENTENCE APPEARING NEAR ITS BEGINNING: "THE TASK, THE SOVIET SIDES BELIEVES, IS TO DEEPEN AND BROADEN THAT (IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS) ALREADY REACHED, TO OVERLAY IT WITH A STRONG WEB OF MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TIES IN THE MOST VARIED AREAS IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE THE IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS A SOLID, IRREVERSIBLE CHARACTER, DESPITE THE CONTRADICTIONS IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND IDEOLOGIES."

8. AT SAME TIME, MAGAZINES, RADIO AND TELEVISION CONTINUE TO SHOW A MUCH MORE BALANCED PICTURE AND EVEN INCREASINGLY COOPERATE WITH USIS ON STORIES. RADIO MOSCOW HAS RECENTLY RUN A SPECIAL 15-MINUTE FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM ON DEPARTED JOFFREY BALLETT, TWO CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADING GENERAL-INTEREST MAGAZINES HAVE GLADLY ACCEPTED EMBASSY-PROVIDED MATERIAL ON SPACE AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS, AND CENTRAL TELEVISION NOT ONLY HAS SCHEDULED FOR THIS SUNDAY AN EMBASSY-PROVIDED FILM ON DISNEYWORLD BUT REQUESTED SEVERAL MORE DOCUMENTARIES FOR SPOT USE. EVEN IN PHILIPPINES TRAVELOGUE DECEMBER 29, REFERENCE TO U.S. OCCUPATION WERE FRIENDLY.

9. OUR PRESUMPTION IS THAT THE SOVIET PRESS HAS GONE OVERBOARD AFTER HAVING BEEN GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT TO EXPRESS SOVIET DISSATISFACTION RE DISCRIMINATORY RESTRICTIONS TOWARD THE USSR IN BOTH THE TRADE AND EXIM BILLS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS IS A DISTURBING TREND WHICH, IF CONTINUED, WILL BE BOUND TO AFFECT THE PERCEPTION OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS BY PARTY OFFICIALS AND AVERAGE SOVIET CITIZENS. AS SUCH, IT BEARS CLOSE WATCHING.

STOESSEL

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